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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

25X1A

COUNTRY Poland

SUBJECT Medical Conditions: Procedure for Sick Persons Under
State Health Insurance System/Shortage of Specialists/
Charges/ShortagesPLACE ACQUIRED
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Procedure Under Compulsory Health System

2. "Every worker and his entire family are compulsorily insured against sickness. This insurance remains valid for three months after the worker has left a job. If a person falls ill he must first go to his district physician (lekarz rejonowy) who may give him sick leave, medical instructions to call on a specialist.
3. "The district physicians receive patients in their rooms. Specialists receive patients on the premises of the Sickness Fund. A district physician may give a patient eight days of sick leave in three periods of three, three and two days. If he is ill for a longer time he has to report to a commission of the Sickness Fund (In Gdynia at 40, 22.July Street). This commission receives only between 1-3 p.m. and is frightfully overburdened. Therefore another commission for seamen and dockers has been established in Polska Street near the cold storage building.) Sick seamen are not allowed to take medical treatment abroad. They are brought back to Poland. The commissions have the right to give a patient sick leave for up to two months all in one bit. They never examine the patient, only look at the physician's certificate and usually confirm his opinion. A commission is no concilium of doctors, only a body to grant sick leave and to send people to hospitals. Sixty or seventy persons daily jam the Polska commission for seamen and dockers in the reception hours between 12 and 3 p.m. At the Sickness Fund commission the tempo is more furious still; there the commission has to get through 100 people in three hours. X-ray pictures are taken only between 2 and 4 p.m.

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4. "The district physician decides whether a patient is to be sent to the commission or to a specialist. The specialist also has the right to grant sick leave and to send patients to hospitals. If a person is seriously ill, however, it is best to seek a specialist privately for they receive only patients two or three times weekly at the Sickness Fund and then for only two-three hours at a time. A children's specialist receives only for half an hour every week. Sometimes one has to wait from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. for one's turn.

Shortage of Specialists

5. "If one falls ill one day the earliest one can get to a doctor would be the next day. If one is lucky this is considered the first 'sickness day'. If one merely feels badly and stays in bed at home for a day or two, this is considered 'non-attendance with bad intent' (bumelantstwo) and punished accordingly. A visit to a district physician costs nothing and treatment generally is free. For medicines insured persons pay 10 per cent of the price.
6. "There is a great shortage of specialists in Poland. The country lost at least 3000 young doctors during World War II. New doctors are now produced more or less on the assembly line but they are far from as efficient as the old ones. Formerly a doctor's training took seven or eight years. Now it takes four or at the most five years. Two valued old specialists in Gdynia are Dr. Pawel Smolin (rheumatism and heart diseases) and Dr. [fnu] Dabrowski (a neurologist at the SZPITAL POWSZECHNY).
7. "Privately a specialist charges 50-60 zl. for a visit. An X-ray picture costs 60 zl., a blood analysis 25 zl. There are still private clinics in the larger towns, e.g., the Omega clinic in Warsaw exists to this day. The reason is said to be that the present high officials have no confidence in the state-sponsored health system and prefer to have some really high-class places to fall back on. Some doctors charge only 35-40 zl. for a visit. The rule is that they have to give the patient a receipt for the fee but knowing how high their taxes are, most patients say that they do not want one.
8. "A good doctor's income is 3000-6000 zl. monthly, the best specialists earn up to 7000 zl. At the hospitals they get 1000-2000 zl. monthly but must work in several places. The State drives them terribly and they do not have much time for private practice, sometimes only a few hours a week. A couple of years ago doctors still had their own cars. Now few still own cars. Most travel by bus or tramcar.

Shortages

9. "Medicines are in very short supply, especially the patent medicines. Remifon, a remedy for tuberculosis of the lungs, is most difficult to find at the chemists'. Sometimes it can be found in the so-called commission shops but its sale there is illegal, of course.
10. "Space is short at hospitals. In lunatic asylums four patients may be jammed in a cell for one: they fight like anything among themselves but nobody cares. In hospitals two or three persons are placed in a room for one. The fees for hospital treatment are high and there are no fixed dues: if a married man is laid up, his family gets 50 per cent of his salary but a bachelor only get 14 per cent for himself. All sanatoria (for consumptives, etc.) are very full. In order to get a bed one has to wait for somebody to die. The fees are as high as in the hospitals. One is sent there by the special Sickness Fund commissions.

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11. "It is very difficult to get spectacles: frames exist but for the lenses one must wait months. They are not manufactured in Poland but come from the Soviet Zone of Germany.
12. "Gold teeth are no longer made in Poland; instead of gold a white metal is used. Merely for a dental check over a private dentist charges 30 zl. For a set of false teeth one has to wait six-12 months, and when they arrive at last the fit is bad. To improve the fit takes at least another three months."

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